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### Waldo Larson history

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

By Jack Ryan

Missoula, Oct. (00)---Every kid in American knows the story about Abraham Lincoln's struggle to get an education by study in the firelight of a Kentucky cabin, and how Tom Edison read books as a candy butcher on a railroad train.

This may be news to you -- but the compelling drive to learn, in spite of all obstructions, still lives.

This is a story about Waldo Larson. He was born in Allegan, Michigan, some years ago. Never did finish high school, because he went to work on the lake freighters. Came 1940 and with the draft staring him in the face, he enlisted in the Navy. Then came the war, and Waldo served with the submarines both in the Atlantic and Pacific. He came up out of the deep eventually and served at shore stations all over the map. He got married in 1954 in San Francisco, and his wife gave birth to their son, Lars, on Formosa year before last. So much for biographical details.

When Waldo went into the Navy 20 years ago, he told himself that, somehow, he was going to get an education. With the passing years, he took every kind of correspondence and extension course he could think of. Whenever he got on shore long enough, he was registered in night classes at some high school. Eventually, he accumulated enough credits to stand in place of the high school education he had missed.

Along with his own enthusiasm for learning, he turned into quite a missionary for education, according to shipmates. He was forever urging them to hit the books -- particularly those shipmates who had quit school to join the service. And the equivalent of high school wasn't enough to satisfy Waldo, either. With him it was college or bust.



Early this year, with his retirement coming up after 20 years Navy service, Waldo got ready for the next step in his educational program. He had been planning it for quite some time. On August 11, when his retirement papers came through, he was set to go. He had taken the trouble to go through a speed reading course at San Diego in anticipation of the day he would need it, and he had made a thorough study of all the universities and colleges that offered training in a profession that he had picked out -- forestry.

This fall, Waldo Larson, 20 years a Navy man, registered at Montana State University as a freshman, bound for a degree in forestry. He is studying zoology, botany, chemistry and speech, in addition to beginning forestry. With his kind of drive, he might get that degree in three years. He thinks it will take the routine four years, but however long or short it takes, Waldo is in for the duration.

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